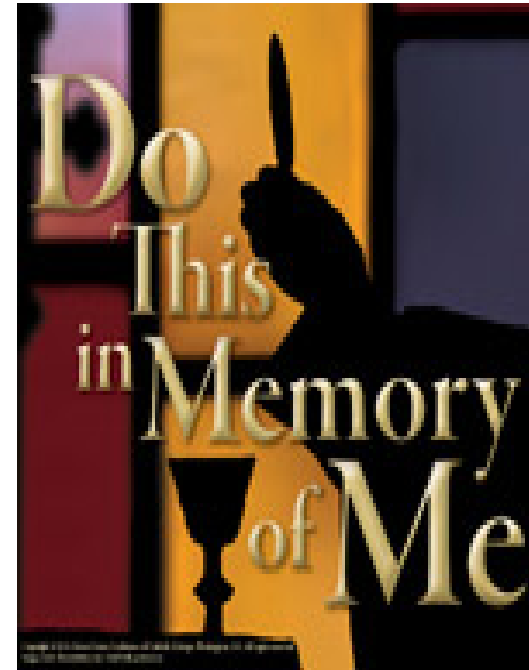


Handbook for Catechists

St. Jude The Apostle Parish



Do This in Memory of Me.
2011-2012

Catechist Prayer

Jesus, Teacher, Catechist, Minister,

Grant that I may always remember You

In the consecrating of the Bread and Wine.

May I always remember You, Lord, Jesus Christ,

In the breaking of the Bread

And the sharing of the Wine.

Make me mindful of You and Your Sacrifice of Love.

May I always remember You, Lord, loving me.

Guide me in teaching others the Good News

Of our salvation and of Your everlasting love for us.

Support me in serving those You have entrusted to me.

Aid me in the work that I have been called to do,

To go forth and help others know You better,

And to recognize You in the Breaking of the Bread.

Help me become the leaven for the Bread of Life,

To rise in the hearts of those I am privileged to serve.

Permit me to knead the dough that is needed

To form community among all Your beloved.

Bless me, Lord Jesus, and all those I serve.

Grant that we may enjoy the blessings and graces we share

In unity with the Communion of Saints.

Nourish us with the Bread of Life.

Make us worthy of Your love and sacrifice.

Help us recognize and remember You always.

Protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope

For your coming, Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

This handbook is intended to serve as a guideline for the policies and procedures as outlined by the Diocese of Wilmington and the specific directives for the Religious Education programs of St. Jude The Apostle Parish.

THE CALL OF THE CATECHIST

“The call of the ministry of Catechist is a vocation, an interior call, the voice of the Holy Spirit.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, p. 228).

Those who answer this call need to be practicing Catholics, participating in the life of the parish, especially by attending Sunday Eucharist. The spiritual life of the catechist should be characterized by a love of God and the Catholic Church, supported by personal prayer, and lived out faithfully in the ordinary experiences of veryday life.

In responding to this commitment, the catechist is responsible for:

- Consenting to a criminal background check
- Completing the Diocesan Volunteer Covenant annually
- Working with *For the Sake of God's Children* diocesan guidelines to create safe environments
- Teaching only approved Church doctrine
- Continuing his/her own personal, educational, and spiritual development by participating in parish and diocesan catechetical formation programs
- Preparing lessons and organizing classroom materials in advance
- Being on time for class
- Providing a positive classroom atmosphere with a prayer area
- Communicating with parents about classroom events, student expectations, and progress.

OVERVIEW

The Religious Education Programs for kindergarten through grade twelve are open to all children of registered parishioners. On Sundays there are two sessions:

Kindergarten through Grade 8 meet from 11:15-12:30 p.m. Grades 1 through 8 meet from 5:30-6:45 p.m. Confirmation and post-Confirmation programs are offered for high schoolers during the Sunday evening session. All classes are held in St. Jude's Religious Education Center. Sessions meet from the second Sunday in September through the first Sunday in May.

ACCREDITATION

The Religious Education programs of St. Jude The Apostle Parish are fully accredited by the Diocese of Wilmington. For a program to be designated as accredited by the diocese, catechists must participate in the catechist certification process by attending formation classes and workshops.

ARRIVAL TIMES

Be sure that the students know from the beginning that you expect them to be on time for class each week. If students are late, they will need a late pass from the office to be admitted to class.

ATTENDANCE

It is the catechist's responsibility to keep accurate attendance records. Class lists will be available in each catechist's mail folder. The Catechist's Helper should



*Office of Religious Education
St. Jude The Apostle Church*

*152 Tulip Drive
Lewes, DE 19958*

*302-644-7413
302-644-7415 (Fax)*

*Pam Becker, Director
pbecker1@verizon.net*

302-645-8505 (Home)

302-236-2661 (Cell)

*Lynn Marie, Secretary
lynn.marie1@verizon.net*

SUBSTITUTES

If you are unable to be present for class, please notify the DRE as soon as possible. The DRE will obtain a substitute from the list of cleared catechists. Please provide the lesson plan you have prepared for that session. If you have an emergency and cannot be in class and no one is in the office to take your call, please call the DRE at home at 645-8505 or on her cell phone at 236-2661.

SUPPLIES

No catechist is expected to supply materials for class with his/her own funds. Scissors, markers, pens, pencils, crayons and a stapler can be found in the classroom closet. If other supplies are required we are happy to provide what you need.

Please complete a request form for clergy presence, copy work, materials, AV, crafts, paper, etc. Please submit these requests by the Thursday prior to your session. These may be faxed to 644-7415, e-mailed to the Religious Education Secretary at ynn.marie1@verizon.net, or placed inside your folder. **We cannot make copies for you during class time.**

TEACHING AIDS

In order to assist the catechist, the parish has developed a DVD/video, audio and book library. There are TV's, VCRs, DVD players, an overhead projector and a laptop projector available for classroom use. Each classroom has a CD player stored in the teacher's closet.

The Religious Education office has reproducible materials for activities and seasonal projects. These and other printed resources are kept on file in the Religious Education office and are available for your use.

record attendance by marking each child's name in pencil with a "P," "A," or "T" for Tardy. Please keep the attendance sheets inside your folder.

On-time, consistent attendance is expected. When a child is absent, a note is required when the child returns. Please forward all notes to the office by putting them in your folder.

The student is to work with the teacher to make up missed assignments in a timely manner. A pattern of three or more unexcused absences and class work not made up will result in a parent conference with the teacher and DRE.

BUILDING USAGE

The primary use of the building is for the faith formation of our children, young people and Parish ministries. Each person is expected to share in the responsibility for the cleanliness and security of the area they are using.

A complete copy of the guidelines for the Religious Education Center is included in the catechist orientation folder.

The catechist should review these guidelines with their students at the beginning of the year, and secure their cooperation.

Children arriving at class before their catechist may not enter the classroom but must wait in the hall until the catechist arrives.

Catechists may not leave students in the classroom unless two adults are present.

Students are not allowed to run the halls.

Food is permitted in the classrooms; however, you

must clean-up after your class. Please do not leave opened containers of food in the classroom.

Before leaving your classroom, please ensure that all windows are closed, ceiling fans are off, trash is picked up off the floor, whiteboards are erased and trash cans emptied. A broom and dust pan is stored in each closet.

CERTIFICATION

Diocesan guidelines require that all catechists be involved in the certification process to ensure their ongoing faith formation. Basic certification training is offered at the parish level via Echoes of Faith. Scheduled diocesan programs for intermediate and advanced level certification are also offered throughout the year. Each teacher is to have ten hours of certification classes every year until he/she reaches Advanced II certification. Teachers with Advanced II certification are required to take a ten hour course every two years.

The Director will keep the catechist informed about all catechist-training opportunities. Records of completed coursework are kept on file in the Religious Education office and will be reviewed with the catechist annually.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

If a catechist suspects any student in the class is a victim of physical/sexual abuse or neglect, the laws of the state of Delaware must be followed. If you have any cause to be concerned, you must discuss this with the Pastor or the Director of Religious Education (DRE). Refer to the diocesan brochure *"Information for Volunteers—Child Abuse and Neglect"* for a detailed explanation.

RECYCLE FOR EDUCATION

We participate in the Staples "Recycle for Education" program. Ink jet and laser jet cartridges can be dropped off in the depository box in the Religious Education Center. Staples will give \$2 in credit for every cartridge we return to them. This helps to defray the cost of school and office supplies.

SAFETY

In order to ensure the safety of our younger children, teachers will bring all K-6th grade students to the gathering space for dismissal. **Parents of kindergarten and first grade children must pick up their child there.** Teachers will wait with the children until parents arrive. Older siblings may accompany younger ones out of the building.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Children with special learning needs (i.e., mentally or physically challenged) are welcome and included in our programs. Parents are asked to indicate their children's special needs at registration time and this information will be passed on to the classroom teacher.

STEWARDSHIP

In keeping with Catholic teaching that all we have is a gift from God, students will receive stewardship envelopes monthly in the mail. Envelopes feature a place for students to indicate their gift(s) of time, talent, or treasure. Students are encouraged to use the envelopes at every weekend Mass.

limited to the loss, theft, damage, or destruction of PTDs or any contents therein.”

PLANNING

Lesson planning is essential to the success of the educational environment. Each catechist will prepare a lesson plan for every session. These plans must be available in case the need for a substitute catechist arises.

Each Catechist will provide an introductory letter to parents including classroom expectations, teacher contact information and homework policy. Catechists should keep parents informed of classroom progress by sending home the Gospel Weeklies, tear-out pages from the text, or a weekly note or e-mail.

PRAYER

It is expected that every class begin and end with prayer. It is recommended that the children be given the opportunity to lead prayer in the classroom. Each classroom is supplied with a prayer table and a battery-operated candle. Monthly prayer services are held in the gathering space or in the church.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Catechists will communicate with parents or guardians regarding the participation, cooperation and progress of their children by completing a progress report that will be e-mailed home in January.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

Decisions on class cancellation due to bad weather or emergency conditions are made as early as possible and will be announced on radio station WGMD/92.7 FM and local television stations. Cancellation information will also be posted on the parish website www.stjudeslewesde.org and on the office voice mail. Catechists can expect to receive a phone call to inform them personally of any closures.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Catechists should work on a cooperative basis with their fellow catechists with whom they share a classroom to maintain a prayer space, bulletin boards and tack strips. Display areas should be changed on a regular basis during the school year to reflect the work of our students and the subject matter they are studying.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

The purpose of observation is to improve the quality of catechetical instruction and participant learning. The DRE is responsible for the on-going observation of catechists. Observation can take place in formal and informal ways. Most of the time, these observations will take the form of impromptu visits throughout the year.

CLASSROOM RECYCLING

A decorated cardboard box is provided in each classroom for the recycling of clean paper, cans, plastic, and glass. At the end of class, please empty your recycling as well as trash in the receptacles provided in

the gathering space.

CLERGY PRESENCE

One of the Deacons is available at each session to lead prayer, and provide assistance and support. Please take advantage of the special expertise unique to their ministry by requesting them to visit your classroom and to be a guest speaker. You can use the requisition form for this purpose.

COMMUNICATIONS

To keep catechists and parents informed, the Religious Education office uses email, the parish website, and regular mail. Catechists receive a weekly email newsletter. Parents receive weekly email highlights, "Take Time on Tuesday." "The Faith Connection" is provided for your spiritual nourishment and will be e-mailed weekly with the catechist newsletter.

CONFIDENTIALITY

To protect the privacy of our teachers and families, emails are sent without revealing personal addresses and phone numbers are confidential.

COPYRIGHT LAWS

Catechists must adhere to the copyright laws of the United States; i.e., we do not duplicate materials that are copyrighted. Textbook materials usually indicate pages that are permissible for reproduction.

need arises. Another link, "Catechist Corner" contains information pertinent to your ministry.

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY DEVICES (PTD)

Diocesan policy states:

"All extraneous personally owned technology devices, including, but not limited to, cellular phones, BlackBerrys, pagers, beepers, gaming devices, headsets, and other communication devices are for use only during an actual lock-down or emergency. Other devices, including, but not limited to, tablet PCs, mobile presenters, wireless tablets, digital audio and video recorders, Palms, Sidekicks, iPods, Kindles, iPads, MP3 players, texting calculators, camera video phones, digital cameras or laptops are to be used only when permission has been granted by an institutional or organizational employee with the authority to grant such permission. Devices capable of capturing, transmitting, or storing images or recordings may never be accessed, turned on or operated in restrooms, dressing rooms, or other areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. To protect the safety and well-being of students, staff and other community members' personal property and to avoid disruptions to the learning environment; group leaders, teachers, or school personnel reserve the right to confiscate or collect any PTD. The content of any PTD device may be reviewed by a designated chaperone or official as part of any investigation of policy violation or other suspected inappropriate, immoral and/or illegal use.

If an illegal act is discovered, local law enforcement officials will be contacted. The Catholic Diocese of Wilmington and its parishes and organizations are not responsible for any harm, to PTD's, including but not

perpetrated by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the diocese must report the incident immediately to the Division of Family Services in Delaware at 1-800-292-9582.

HALL MONITOR

To assist the catechist and to provide security for all children, there will be hall monitors during each session. The role of the hall monitor will be to assist the catechist in case of an emergency, ensure that no child is roaming the hall, and assist with any late arrivals and early dismissals.

KEEPING OUR PROMISES

One of the requirements of the Bishops' Charter is to have in place a curriculum for children, young people, and parents, which prepares them to create and maintain a safe environment. Sexual abuse awareness is provided every year at every grade level. It is the intent of the curriculum guide to provide age appropriate information on an annual basis to be certain that our teaching is consistent and sequential. The curriculum can be accessed on the diocesan website at

<http://www.cdow.org/FSGCKeepingPromisesComplete.pdf>

The video, *Abused Kids: See It! Stop It!* is required viewing by catechists and all who work with children on a regular and recurring basis.

PARISH WEBSITE

A Religious Education link is posted on the parish website, www.stjudeslewesde.org. The school calendar, Registration Form and Annual Consent and Release form are posted on this link. Other forms will be posted as the

CURRICULUM

The curriculum used in the Religious Education program follows diocesan guidelines. A copy of each grade curriculum along with a teacher manual is given to each teacher when they begin their teaching assignment at St. Jude's. A copy of the curriculum can be found at

<http://www.cdow.org/catecheticalwknd.html>.

Additional materials and subject content incorporated into the program by the teacher are subject to the DRE's approval.

DISCIPLINE

In order to assist the students with self-discipline, the catechist will develop a code of conduct for the classroom. In addition to the discipline guidelines stated in "For the Sake of God's Children Volunteer Covenant," the catechists must hold their students accountable for their behavior and expect a high standard of conduct. Parents should be consulted when problems arise. If any student is habitually unruly, however, the catechist should not expend class time on discipline. Kindly send the child to the DRE, who will deal with the individual. If disruptive behavior continues, parents will be informed of the behavior and/or a conference requested with the parents.

EARLY DISMISSAL

No child will be dismissed from class early without the written request of the parent/guardian and the approval of the administrator in charge. The building principal or hall monitor will escort the parent to the classroom to pick up their child.

EMERGENCIES: Medical & Evacuation

First Aid

A simple first aid kit is kept in the teachers' closet in each of the classrooms to deal with any minor injury that occurs during class. A first aid kit and an emergency defibrillator are also available on the wall next to room 29.

Medical

In the event that a child is unable to continue to Participate in classroom activities, the catechist/aide/hall monitor should bring the child to the DRE'S office so that their parent may be called. The building principal will call home to apprise the parent of the problem. If there is no answer, the principal will call the contact person listed on the emergency form. If neither of the above parties is available and time is of the essence, the building principal will call an ambulance to transport the child to a local medical facility. We will continue to call contact persons until someone is reached.

For an injury that results in bleeding, nosebleeds, etc. the person assisting the child should wear surgical gloves (available in your milk crate) whenever possible. Direct contact with blood is potentially infectious, especially when there are breaks in the skin.

Should a child become physically ill during class, the catechist should use the surgical gloves provided before touching any bodily fluids. In the event of an accident, no matter how slight, a parish incident report should be filled out and given to the DRE. This form can be found in your catechist folder.

Fire/Evacuation

Catechists and Aides should be aware of the

following procedures in case of a fire emergency or evacuation. Please instruct students about each procedure at the beginning of the year.

Close doors and windows so fire does not spread.

Go to the EXIT closest to the classroom.

Lead the class away from the school building to your designated meeting place.

Count to make sure all are present.

The building principal or teacher will take attendance folders with him/her as they exit.

Maintain calm and order throughout.

The driveways in front of the Religious Education Center must be kept clear so that emergency equipment would have access in the event of an emergency.

FOLDERS

Your folder is a way of communicating with the office and a way of keeping current on any changes occurring in the program. Please check your folder before class. Parents may be giving you checks, dismissal notes, tardy notes, absent notes, etc. Please place these items in your folder for office retrieval.

FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S CHILDREN

For the Sake of God's Children is the comprehensive plan developed by the Diocese of Wilmington in response to the Charter adopted by the bishops of the United States at their semi-annual meeting in Dallas, Texas, in June 2002.

Volunteers who interact on a regular or ongoing basis with children or youth are required to have a criminal background check prior to being eligible for service. A Volunteer Covenant is to be signed annually. Any volunteer who witnesses an act of child abuse